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AUTHOR Roames, Richard L.
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ABSTRACT

An overview is presented of four major redesigns that the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has undergone since it was established in 1952. Growing criticism had advocated radical redesigning of NCATE in the areas of governance, procedures, finance, and the "Standards." Four alternative principles were adopted in the course of NCATE redesigning: (1) unit accreditation replacing individual program accreditation; (2) enhanced articulation between state approval and national accreditation; (3) creation of a Board of Examiners; and (4) revision of the "Standards." One significant change proposed by the redesign was a new system of NCATE governance. The NCATE redesign now endeavors to incorporate the professional, practitioner, legal, and specialty constituents in a fashion of shared governance. The issue of quality in teacher preparation was the central focus in the the redesigning of the NCATE "Standards." The inclusion of quantitative criteria strengthens the NCATE accreditation process and demonstrates responsiveness to demands for quality teacher training. (JD)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CURRENT REDESIGN OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR ACCREDITATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

by

Richard L. Roames, EdD
Purdue University Calumet
Hammond, Indiana

Since its establishment in 1952, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has undergone four major redesigns of its governance structure and its evaluative criteria. The first redesign came in 1954, when the National Commission on Accrediting (NCA) refused to recognize NCATE as the only accrediting agency for teacher education due to the fact that the state-legal education associations held parity with the practitioner and professional associations on the NCATE Council. In 1965, NCATE underwent a second restructuring as a result of criticism voiced by the membership of the American Association of Colleges for

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Teacher Education (AACTE) concerning inconsistencies, by NCATE, in the accrediting process. When the National Education Association (NEA) sought parity in the governance of NCATE, with AACTE, during the early 1970's, NCATE once again underwent a restructuring of its governance and evlauative criteria.

An expectation that came out of the parity issue of the early 1970's was the development of a more responsive NCATE. This expectation, however, was never fully realized. NCATE continued to "lag" behind the educational advances and socio-economic changes of society. This is somewhat illustrated in the belatedness of NCATE in revising its Standards to address the issues of multicultural and special education.[1]

The resistance to change was possibly related to NCATE's constituent membership's concern with the "quantity of students" in teacher education programs, rather than the "quality of the programs." The practitioner association being concerned with the "labor intensity of future teachers" and the professional association being concerned with "budgets and governance in maintaining their programs" are examples of vested

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[1] Lyn Gubser, interview held at the Association for Educational Communications and Technology offices, Washington, DC, June 18, 1985.

interests that distracted NCATE from the goal of regulating and stimulating teacher education programs.[2]

Whatever the causes, by the late 1970's the criticism of NCATE's Standards and accrediting processes had reached a level which was beginning to exceed that of the criticisms aimed at NCATE during the 1960's. In an effort to keep the NCATE Council abreast of the intensity of the criticism, Rolf Larson, director of NCATE from 1964 to 1978, sent a memorandum to each NCATE Council member on May 11, 1977, in which he stated that

> Whether it is a matter of communication in 1977 or a combination of many factors (including communication) it is difficult to say, but there is more talk, more criticism, more rumors these days than seem to have been true in the past, although NCATE has always been worth a moment or two of discussion.[3]

The "moment or two of discussion" began to develop into more specific points of criticism as individuals began to express their criticisms of NCATE through various education journal articles, as a study of NCATE's accreditation process and its impact upon teacher training programs was published, and finally, and as the professional associations connected with schools,

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Rolf Larson, Memorandum to NCATE Council Members, May 11, 1977, Washington, DC.

colleges, and departments of education began to assess their relationships with NCATE. Unlike the calls for the restructuring of NCATE during the 1960's, the criticisms of the late 1970's and early 1980's advocated a more radical redesigning of NCATE in the areas of governance, procedures, finance, and the Standards.

Calls for the Redesign of NCATE

One of the many criticisms to appear in print during the late 1970's concerning NCATE was from a member of the education faculty of one of the institutions involved in a dispute with NCATE over an accreditation decision.[4] Alan R. Tom, an associate professor and coordinator of the secondary education program at Washington University, authored several articles critical of both NCATE's decision and the "flaws" in NCATE's Standards.

Tom suggested that the NCATE Standards, while at the very heart of the accreditation process, were vaguely

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[4] Washington University, located in St. Louis, Missouri, had developed a joint master's degree program for teachers with Maryville College, a nearby liberal arts college. During the fall of 1979, NCATE sent visitation teams to evaluate each institution. The result of the visitation evaluations was the granting of accreditation for the program at Washington University, but the denial of such at Maryville College. See Alan R. Tom, "NCATE Standards and Program Quality: You Can't Get There From Here," Phi Delta Kappan 61 (Oct, 1980), p.115.

written, lacked operational definitions, and varied in the level of expectations. To counter what he saw as a "long and tortuously detailed document," Tom recommended that there should be a comprehensive review and critical analysis of the Standards by both the "consumers of NCATE" and "those who occupy positions of power and influence in the NCATE process."[5]

In response to Tom's comments, Lyn Gubser, the executive director of NCATE, countered by saying that it was "hardly news that NCATE's standards may need further review." Gubser indicated that since 1978, NCATE had "developed new accrediting procedures, instituted a micrographic archival system, implemented management by objectives, developed a new method of training evaluation team members, and is now even contemplating a change of name."[6]

In 1980 and 1981, Tom wrote two more articles criticizing the NCATE Standards, both of which were published in AACTE's Journal of Teacher Education. In the first article, Tom stated that the Standards were "irrelevant" to insuring the quality of

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[5] Ibid. p. 116.

[6] Lyn Gubser, "NCATE's Director Comments on the Tom Critique," Phi Delta Kappan 61 (October, 1980), p. 117.

teacher education graduates and required teacher training programs to maintain an "obsolete" professional curriculum due to what the Standards regulated. Tom proposed that NCATE cease its emphasis on regulating processes and procedures and develop a program of accreditation that would "protect" students from being exploited by "weeding out" substandard programs.[7]

Alan Tom's advocation of consumer protectionism in teacher education did reflect to some extent the general consumerism movement in most segments of American society. The fact that college enrollment and funds were declining in the late 1970's and early 1980's was cause for concern about the level of quality which could be maintained in a teacher education program faced with reducing its staff and curriculum. Such cutbacks may have been the reason for the increase in denials of accreditation of programs from ten percent in the mid-seventies to around thirty percent in the 1980's.[8]

In his second Journal of Teacher Education article, Tom actually got down to the business of putting forth "an alternative set of NCATE standards." Tom

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[7] Alan R. Tom, "Chopping NCATE Standards Down to Size," Journal of Teacher Education 31 (November-December, 1980):25-29.

[8] Gubser, "NCATE's Director Comments on the Tom Critique," p. 117.

suggested that the present twenty-seven NCATE standards could be reduced to four: selective admission standards for students, competence of faculty members, adequate financial support of the program, and faculty involvement with the local schools. Adherence to these four simple standards would, in Tom's opinion, maintain the quality of teacher preparation and yet allow for each college and university to develop its own unique curriculum and program for teacher education.[9]

In his response to Tom's proposal, Richard Wisniewski, dean of education at the University of Oklahoma, suggested that while Alan Tom's alternative set of standards had merit, they should be incorporated into the NCATE standards rather than replace them. Wisniewski, in making a case for the status quo, stated:

> It has been a painstaking struggle to achieve the standards now in place. They are the result of conflicting interests and goals. It has also taken years to develop the cohesiveness and power NCATE is only beginning to exert. Indeed, one might suggest that some attacks on NCATE are motivated by the fact that NCATE is moving steadily toward addressing quality issues. There is much to lose for institutions and individuals in teacher education if NCATE becomes more than a paper tiger. Those deeply concerned with the quality of teacher education want NCATE to have teeth. Those who for a variety of reasons will

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[9] Alan R. Tom, "An Alternative Set of NCATE Standards," Journal of Teacher Education 32 (November-December, 1981):48-52.

> not address quality issues struggle to prevent rigor in the application of standards.
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> If teacher education is to achieve full professional status, we must stop evading issues of quality. It is one thing to be cautious in our public pronouncements, but why do we so often speak of quality in hushed tones in our professional deliberations? The question is rhetorical but Dr. Tom's comments are not. Indeed, they are refreshing. The debate over stronger admissions standards is but one illustration.[10]

As the debate concerning NCATE was intensifying in the education journals, the Institute for Research on Teaching (IRT) released a report detailing "how NCATE applies its Standards and the effect of its procedures on the quality of programs in professional education." Entitled NCATE: Does It Matter?, the report was released during November, 1980.[11]

The IRT report, commonly referred to as the Wheeler Report in recognition of the report's principal writer, indicated "some critical weaknesses in the NCATE accreditation process." Among those weaknesses cited in the report were that the "vagueness in NCATE's Standards and their general organization impede attempts to judge

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[10] Richard Wisniewski, "Quality in Teacher Education: A Reply to Alan Tom," Journal of Teacher Education 32 (November-December, 1981): 53.

[11] Christopher W. Wheeler, NCATE: Does It Matter? Research Series 92 (East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, November, 1980), p. 1.

program quality;" that the lack of uniformity among accreditation decisions was due in part to the voluntary nature of the visitation teams and committees; that "NCATE's financial base depends heavily on revenue from the institutions it accredits;" and that "unlike an organization with legal authority, NCATE can only recommend and suggest, not require, that change be made."[12]

When the IRT report was presented to the NCATE council, one month prior to the report's official release, the NCATE Council took exception to some aspects of the report. In passing a resolution regarding the IRT report, the NCATE Council maintained that an "imbalance unfortunately characterizes much of the report," since "highly positive" aspects of NCATE's operation are "not underscored" to the same "degree that negative conclusions are emphasized."[13]

While the IRT report did indicate that NCATE had been effective in stimulating some institutions to modify or improve their programs in teacher training, many

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[12] Ibid. passim.

[13] Statement of Reaction to IRT Study, Resolution Adopted by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, in the Minutes of Meeting of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, October 18-20, 1980, Washington, DC.

institutions of higher education were giving serious consideration to phasing out their involvement with NCATE and developing alternative means of voluntary, professional governance for teacher training. Progressively, the institutional associations representative of the types of higher education institutions with teacher training programs began "to review fundamental issues involved in national accreditation and to make recommendations to the membership as to what portion should be adopted regarding NCATE."[14]

One of the first institutional associations to assess what position its membership should take in regard to NCATE was the Association of Colleges and Schools of Education in State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (ACSESULGC). As early as 1976, ACSESULGC had surveyed its constituency in regard to NCATE, and as a result of survey's critical findings appointed a study committee to formulate recommendations for the association concerning its position on NCATE.[15]

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[14] Dale P. Scannell et al., A Proposed Accreditation System: An Alternative to the Current NCATE System (Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, January, 1983), p. 5.

[15] Ibid.

At a meeting in February, 1977, the ACSESULGC gave a great deal of consideration to the "question of the present value of NCATE." The potential of an ACSESULGC resolution on NCATE ranged from a "call for the walk-out of 80 to 85 Schools of Education," to a "call on the (NCATE) Council to clarify some things while continuing support."[16] The matter was tabled until an October meeting when the final decision was for ACSESULGC member institutions to remain a part of NCATE on the condition that NCATE undertake certain reform efforts.[17]

Following a somewhat similar scenario, the Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities (TECSCU) surveyed its member institutions in 1980. The result of the survey was the development and approval of a TECSCU resolution which

> stated TECSCU's strong support for the accreditation process as one of the quality controls in teacher education, stated its belief that accreditation should be mandatory and identified the role of national accreditation to be one which would monitor and report the extent to which states enforce compliance with national standards for accreditation.[18]

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[16] Larson, Memorandum, May 11, 1977.

[17] Scannell et al., A Proposed Accreditation System, p. 5.

[18] Ibid.

During 1982, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities conducted a poll of its state representatives in regard to the membership's position on NCATE. The findings of the poll indicated that "four institutions had dropped their NCATE membership and at least 10 institutions were considering dropping it."[19]

The controversy over NCATE became so great, even though NCATE sought to be responsive to the criticisms expressed, that it was soon evident that continued support for NCATE would decline unless NCATE made an "effort to reform the organization from top to bottom." A "total-reform effort," or redesign of NCATE, was perceived as necessary in response to the

> external criticism and internal wrangling over accreditation standards and procedures that (had) been attacked in recent years by members of its own council and other higher-education organizations as arbitrary, inconisistent, and redundant.20

The Redesigning of NCATE

In an effort to rectify the increasing discontent with NCATE, and its own dissatisfaction with the limited

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[19] Agenda for Meeting of the AASCU Committee on Accreditation, October 31, 1982, Nashville, TN.

[20] Cindy Currence, "NCATE Debates Key Changes in Accreditation," Education Week 4 (October 24, 1984), p. 1.

response of NCATE to the IRT study's criticisms, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) appointed a Committee on Accreditation Alternatives (CAA) during November, 1981. The purpose of the CAA was "to develop an alternative accreditation process designed to overcome the deficiencies of the existing (NCATE) system." In essence, AACTE was wanting to explore ways of "redesigning" NCATE's governance structure, as well as NCATE's Standards.[21]

While many proposals for the redesigning of NCATE were being developed in the early 1980's,[22] it would eventually be the CAA redesign proposal that would provide the basis for the NCATE Redesign. In fact, the six "primary features of the proposal"[23] would be adopted in June 1983, by the NCATE Council as a set of

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[21] Scannell et al., A Proposed Accreditation System, p. 2.

[22] The number of redesign proposals had reached such a point that at the NCATE Council meeting on October 18, 1982, "the Council asked the Director to prepare an analysis of all NCATE restructuring proposals to date, and the ways in which they impact upon the Council and its operation." The report was to include a proposal for "redesigning the governance, financing, and management" of NCATE developed by the director, but never adopted by NCATE. See Minutes of Meeting of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, October 16-18, 1982, Washington, DC.

[23] Scannell et al., A Proposed Accreditation System, p. 2.

"alternative principles" for the NCATE accrediting process. These alternative principles were as follows:

1. Accreditation decisions will be made for the teacher education unit;

2. Continuing accreditation will replace the current concept of reaccreditation;

3. Articulation will be provided between state approval and national accreditation;

4. Visiting team members will be selected from a Board of Examiners, members of which will be highly-skilled in evaluation techniques and well-trained in NCATE processes and standards;

5. Five unit focused standards will replace the current six families for basic and advanced programs; and

6. The NCATE Annual List will be expanded to include a description of the unit and data which describe the support level for professional education programs.24

Of the six alternative principles adopted, four are of particular interest in light of their implied departure, on a significant basis, from previous policy and practice concerning NCATE accreditation. The four principles are unit accreditation replacing individual program accreditation, enhanced articulation between state approval and national accreditation,

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24 Minutes of Meeting of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, June 17-20, 1983, Baltimore, MD.

creation of a Board of Examiners, and revision of the Standards.

In presenting a rationale for replacing the current program accreditation practice of NCATE with a unit accreditation approach, similar to the institutional accreditation practices of the regional accrediting associations, Richard Wisniewski, dean of education at the University of Oklahoma and a CAA committee member, stated in a written proposal that

> It is a fact of institutional life that not all programs are of equal valence. Some programs are always stronger than others. This fact does not mean that weak programs are necessarily unaccreditable. Nor does the presence of a weak program mean that the entire SCDE is weak. It would be far more helpful to institutions if NCATE would focus on the attributes of the total SCDE. Does it have the resource base, faculty and students to implement programs in specified areas? Current NCATE standards focus on the curricula of individual programs, and this practice should be continued - but in a broader context. It is likely that some programs will be cited for strengths and others for weaknesses. The fact that some programs are weaker than others should not force the entire institution to be stigmatized, however, if the overall assessment is that the SCDE is viable.25

The emphasis on unit accreditation was not only related to removing NCATE from the ongoing arena of

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25 Richard Wisneiski, "A Rationale for Unit Rather Than Programmatic Accreditation," June 30, 1982.

criticism focused on NCATE's "unclear and ambiguous" set of program accreditation standards, but also sought to eliminate the "redundancy of program and institutional reviews." The fact that NCATE was in essence approving specific teacher training programs was perceived as a duplication of effort and financial expense by institutions which were required by law, in most states, to also maintain state program approval.[26]

In its initial drafts, the CAA proposal recommended that states require NCATE accreditation prior to state program approval, and that the "curriculum standards become the resonsibility of the state." The latter part of the recommendation was based "upon the assumption that the NEA will be successful with its action plan to establish professionally-governed licensure commissions in each state."[27]

In the final draft of the CAA proposal, the concept of eliminating curricula criteria from the unit standards was, however, dropped. The CAA compromised by requiring institutions to provide program information in

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[26] Scannell et al., A Proposed Accreditation System, p. 7.

[27] Minutes of the Meeting, NCATE, October 16-18, 1982.

an institutional report for each teacher training program offered at each degree level. The major distinction from past NCATE practice would be that "program information would be used to assess the quality of the unit, not for making separate program or category accreditation decision."[28]

The establishment of a highly trained board of examiners was perceived as a means to resolve the problems of composition, size, and expertise of visitation teams, which were often the central focus of criticism in regard to NCATE accreditation procedures. The Board of Examiners was to consist of extensively trained individuals, appointed by NCATE's constituent member associations, who would be appointed for three year terms and "serve on two or three visiting teams each year," the main assumption being that such highly-trained visitation teams could be comprised of fewer members, which would decrease visitation expenses for institutions, and still effectively operate.[29]

When the NCATE Council adopted, upon the recommendation of its own ad hoc Committee on NCATE

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[28] Scannell et al., A Proposed Accreditation System, p. 35.

[29] Ibid. p. 23.

Redesign,[30] the six alternative principles for NCATE accreditation as stated in the CAA's final proposal on accreditation alternatives, the Council also approved procedures for the systematic development and implementation of the Redesign. A part of the procedural process was the establishment of eight ad hoc Committees[31] working under the auspices of the permanent standing committees of NCATE with the charge to study the CAA proposal, solicit additional input, and develop appropriate policies and procedures of recommendation to the NCATE Council.[32]

A final, specific action taken by the NCATE Council at its June, 1983 meeting in regard to a proposed redesigning of NCATE was the adoption of several principles concerning specialty curricula guidelines. The NCATE Council determined, as a part of the

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[30] Though the ad hoc Committee on NCATE Redesign initially met under the name of the ad hoc Committee on Accreditation Alternatives, during May, 1983, by the June, 1983 NCATE Council meeting, the committee's name reference had been changed.

[31] The eight ad hoc committees were Development of Standards; Board of Examiners; Annual List; Data Bank; Phase-in Process and Timeline for New Accreditation Procedures; Articulation of State and National Roles; Timeline and Phase-in for the Total Accreditation Plan; and Governance.

[32] Minutes of the Meeting, NCATE, June 17-20, 1983.

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precondition for an NCATE visit, to retain its advocacy position for strong and appropriate curricula in professional education. In effect the NCATE Council

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33 The NCATE Redesign requires any institution wanting to "establish eligibility for an accreditation evaluation by NCATE," to meet eleven preconditions. An increase of seven preconditions over the 1982 revised NCATE Standards, the eleven preconditions are as follows:

1. An officially designated unit (eg. school, college or department) responsible for the training of teachers.
2. An officially designated dean, director, or chair responsible for "overall administration and operation" of the unit.
3. "Written policies and procedures" for the unit.
4. Evidence of ongoing evaluation and review of the unit.
5. "Students have graduated from the programs that are included within the unit." (A similar precondition to the 1982 Standards).
6. "Basic skills" of students are assessed prior to admission to the teacher training program.
7. "Academic and professional competencies" of students are assessed upon graduation from the teacher training program.
8. Teacher training units in states "not nationally recognized by NCATE" must submit to program review.
9. Teacher training units must have state program approval, if provided for by the respective state. (A similar precondition to the 1982 Standards).
10. Teacher training units must be a part of a regionally accredited institution. (A similar precondition to the 1982 Standards).
11. Teacher training units must be a part of a nondiscriminatory and equal opportunity employer institution (A similar precondition to the 1982 Standards).

See NCATE Redesign (Washington, DC: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, April, 1985), pp. 5-7.

reaffirmed Standard 2.4 and G.2.4 of the 1982 revised Standards, which required program compliance on the part of an institution with Council-approved curriculum guidelines from NCATE constituent and associate organizations. Such a reaffirmation made it clear that NCATE was still very much interested in the governance process of program approval and would be "encouraging" the appropriate state education departments "to reflect the NCATE approved curriculum standards in state requirements for each program area."[34]

After two years of task force reports, public hearings, and several document drafts,[35] the governing board of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education approved, on June 7, 1985, the final draft of the NCATE redesign document concerning standards and procedures.[36] This initial NCATE Council action was followed by a ratification vote on the standards section

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[34] Minutes of the Meeting, NCATE, June 17-20, 1983.

[35] See Richard Kunkel, "A Redesign of National Accreditation," Actions in Teacher Education 6 (Winter, 1984-85), pp. 13-16, for an account of the events and activities of the NCATE Council and ad hoc committees during this period.

[36] Minutes of Council Meeting of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, June 7-10, 1985, St. Louis, MO.

at the Council's meeting in October, 1985,[37] and a vote in March, 1986 that ratified a new constitution outlining the redesign of NCATE's governance structure.

Redesign

The most significant change proposed by the NCATE Redesign might just be its new system of NCATE governance. Due to the NCATE Council's approval of the new governance structure for NCATE in March, 1986, the whole governance structure of teacher education accreditation will enter a new phase.

As proposed by the ad hoc Task Forces on Governance and Finance in February, 1985, and given final approval by the NCATE Council upon the ratification of a new constitution, the NCATE governance structure was radically redesigned. The NCATE Council is now comprised of seventeen voting members. The primary governance areas of the Council will be policy-making, personnel, and finance. The Council will have oversight of three boards: the Unit Accreditation Board, the State Recognition Board, and the Specialty Areas Studies Board.

The Unit Accreditation Board will review the individual unit accreditation cases and will govern the

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[37] National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Council Meeting Minutes, October 10-14, 1985, Washington, DC.

training of members of the Board of Examiners (ie. visitation team members). The State Recognition Board will review individual state approval programs and grant recognition to those state approval programs determined to meet nationally recognized levels of quality. The Speciality Areas Studies Board will recommend criteria for speciality areas of studies at nationally recognized levels, which will then be utilized by the Unit Accreditation Board or the State Recognition Board.[38]

In explaining the rationale for such a governance structure, the task force proposal went on to state that

> This governance structure will bring together many of the current cumbersome practices of the Council and Coordinating Board. It is anticipated, also, that such a governance structure opens the opportunity for an expanded role of NCATE in the future while building upon unit accreditation principles of the current Redesign.[39]

Such a rationale not only creates a new governance system for NCATE, but it could also create a new governance system for teacher training. This tetradic structure or approach to voluntary professional govenance in teacher training, which includes the professional, practitioner, legal, and specialty

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[38] Robert L. Saunders, chairman, memorandum to All Members of the Coordinating Board, February 15, 1985.

[39] Ibid.

associations, will surely affect the governance structures of teacher training within individual states and within individual institutions or units of teacher training.

The significance of the new NCATE Redesign, therefore, resides in its potential to provide accreditation in teacher training with an effective tetradic model in teacher education governance. The fact that the NCATE Redesign endeavors to incorporate the professional, practitioner, legal, and specialty constituents in a fashion of shared governance may be Redesign's greatest achievement in terms of finally attempting to bring some significant regulatory and stimulatory incentive to teacher training and the teaching profession at-large.

The question of control has always been a problem in accrediting teacher training programs. The fact that the professional governance process has continually had to broaden its constituent base for financial and political considerations has, in effect, distracted it from maintaining a clear mission. This is evident in the fact that NCATE has constantly debated and altered just what it is that NCATE accredits.

Initially, NCATE accredited teacher training categories governed by a single administrative agency or

unit. The institutions responded that such governance limited the latitude of teacher training programs. After much criticism, therefore, NCATE altered its accrediting process to focus on the evaluation of programs. Again the institutions criticized the approach of NCATE and recommended unit accreditation, rather than program accreditation.

Unit accreditation does have some merit over program accreditation. It should strengthen the teacher training unit's role within the higher education institution, since the unit will be expected to meet certain quantifiable and institutionally related criteria, especially in regard to students and faculty. It may, as some in teacher education hope, provide a basis for increased financial considerations for the unit.

The inclusion, however, of the specialty program approval process by NCATE will most likely distract NCATE from the primary objective of unit accreditation. NCATE has not merely altered or refined its accrediting process, but has literally expanded it.

The inclusion of both unit accreditation and program review by NCATE will make the accrediting process for teacher training extremely cumbersome and expensive. NCATE cannot financially afford to implement the review

process any more efficiently than the institutions. Even the specialty associations themselves lack the resources of staff and finances to effectively, efficiently, and on schedule complete their respective program reviews. The latter point is somewhat of a current problem already for NCATE.

Redesign's proposal to include the state-legal associations,[41] which over the years had reduced their participation in and influence on NCATE, on a level of parity with AACTE, NEA, and the specialty groups, can be viewed as an attempt not only to increase the articulation between state program approval and national accreditation, as called for in the accreditation

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[40] AILACTE Task Force on Accreditation, "Response to the NCATE Redesign," September, 1985, Jefferson City, TN, p. 5.

[41] The state-legal education associations most often referred to are Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association of State Boards of Education, and National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification. CCSSO and NASDTEC were two of the five original constituent organizations to establish NCATE.

Over the years CCSSO decreased participation in NCATE to the point where NCATE erroneously considered dropping CCSSO as a constituent member for lack of membership dues payment. In November, 1984, CCSSO took action to restore its connection with NCATE and to seek a larger role in national accreditation.

In February, 1980, NASCTEC adopted a motion that called for the association to end its constituent membership with NCATE. The NASDTEC decision came as a result of policy and finance issues.

alternative principles, but also as an attempt to provide national accreditation and even reciprocal certification with some legitimate, regulatory clout. The addition of legal governance to the accrediting process is a goal that NCATE has striven for since NCATE was established.

The difficulty with such a goal is that legal governance does not always maintain the best interest of education. Those individuals involved in legal governance have traditionally tended to be politically and economically motivated. Even when that is not the case, the state legislatures have followed such a pattern. The reality that states tend to be oriented to minimum standards when it comes to education may limit the effectiveness of the state-legal education people in providing universal acceptance of the more optimal national program standards.

Part of the difficulty rests with the assumption that states will begin to adapt their own program approval standards to the level that the specialty associations or learned societies have recommended and that has been approved by NCATE's Specialty Areas Studies Board. Such a selective approach to program standards, however, has traditionally hindered rather than enhanced articulation between national accreditation and state program approval.

In addressing this articulation problem, George Denemark, a former interim director of NCATE, commented in a memorandum dated June 8, 1984 to the NCATE Council and Coordinating Board that

> There is a presumtuousness about the proposal (Redesign) that NCATE will review and endorse curriculum guidelines for specialty areas with the expectation that state agencies will accept such endorsement as a mandate to apply those guidelines in their state approval process. The psychology of one agency reviewing and endorsing criteria while another is expected to apply them seems dubious.42

Redesign Standards

The major changes in the NCATE Standards, created by the Redesign were the reduction in the number of families of standards from six to five and in the quantification of the Standards.[43] After fifty years of

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42 George Denemark, interim director, memorandum to NCATE Council Members and Coordinating Board, June 8, 1984, Washington, DC.

43 Among the recommendations of the AACTE Task Force on Accreditation first discussed by the NCATE Council was one related to the ever-increasing number of standards being incorporated by NCATE.

The minutes of a special meeting in Washington, DC, on August 30-31, 1982, of the NCATE executive committee, state that

> Concerns regarding various aspects of the NCATE accreditation process were aired. These included a "long-overdue" need to re-edit the NCATE Standards. Some are concerned that the Standards are too vague, particularly in light of the relatively high percentage of accreditation denials. There is concern that NCATE has too large a number of standards, and that new standards are added 'nearly every Council meeting.'

discussing the qualitative nature of the Standards, the discussion now shifted to the need for "hard, fast quantifiable standards." The CAA distinction was made that the current NCATE Standards were "basically developmental" and therefore ineffective when utilized in NCATE's regulatory accrediting process.[44]

In stating its rationale for more quanitifiable standards, the CAA stated that

> It is also the case that the standards should focus on those elements most closely identified with quality in teacher education. All of the NCATE standards do not fit this mold. Some are more like preconditions for an accreditation visit than standards. The governance standard, for example, deals with an important issue - the arrangement made by an institution for control of the process of teacher education. A school, college or department of education, however, might well be expected to demonstrate before a visit occurs that its structure for governance meets requirements. Other standards are completely process oriented; for example, the standard on admission, retention and advising of students seems to advocate only that a process exists for each of these functions - it does not set standards for admission and retention which are associated with effective graduates. Further, all of the present standards may not be appropriate to the various levels and

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[44] Scannell et al., A Proposed Accreditation System, p. 6.

> types of programs or categories for which accreditation is awarded. Why, for example, are two governance standards, basic and advanced, needed? Finally, as extensive as they are, the present standards ignore factors usually considered essential to determine the quality of a teacher preparation program (for example, student-faculty ratios or other indicators of how the resource base is deployed; extensive clinical training; and so on).45

The issue of quality in teacher preparation was the central focus in the redesigning of the NCATE Standards. The inclusion of quantitative criteria would, according to the NCATE Council, strengthen the entire NCATE accreditation process and demonstrate NCATE's responsiveness to the profession's and the public's demands for quality teacher training.[46]

NCATE had assisted in the professionalizing of teaching but now faced some responsibility for insuring that teaching's professional status continued to develop. The regulatory role of NCATE was not enough. NCATE was

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[45] Ibid. pp. 6-7.

[46] National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, News release of June 7, 1985, NCATE Council meeting in St. Louis, MO.

being challenged because of its function in the accreditation process to "make a significant contribution to improving quality of programs and graduates."[47]

The former defenses of NCATE accreditation as being needed to bring legitimacy to teacher training or to create a degree of uniform quality in teacher preparation would not suffice in an era where public and professional pressures were advocating a need for teacher competency. Accreditation would have to look "beyond" merely regulating to forcing colleges and the states to support teacher training in a manner that would increase its quality.[48]

The five unit-based standards, which apply to basic and advanced programs, are as follows:

Knowledge Base for Professional Education,

Relationship to the World of Practice,

Students,

Faculty, and

Governance.[49]

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[47] Robert A. Roth, "A Response to Alan Tom and Rich Wisniewski: A Look Beyond," Journal of Teacher Education 33 (September-October, 1982): 36.

[48] Ibid. p. 35.

[49] NCATE Redesign (Washington, DC: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, April, 1985).

The Knowledge Base for Professional Education Standard outlines the "criteria for compliance" of a teacher training unit's curriculum. The three specific areas of this curricula standard are the design, delivery, and content of the unit's curricula. The "content of the curriculum" has further subcriteria that stipulated the "linkages" within the unit for general education, specialty studies, and professional studies.[50]

While the Knowledge Base Standard is essentially the same as the Curricula Standard in the 1982 revised NCATE Standards, the Knowledge Base Standard does differ in three ways. The Knowledge Base Standard places a heavy emphasis on faculty and student involvement in and utilization of research; requires faculty to "keep abreast of" and utilize a "varied set of instructional practices;" and requires collaboration among teacher educators, practitioners, and students in the designing of the curricula.[51]

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[50] Ibid., pp. 15-18.

[51] Robert A. Roth, "A Comparison of the Current and Newly Adopted NCATE Accreditation Systems" Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, December 5, 1985), p. 9.

The Relationship to the World of Practice Standard outlines criteria for clinical and field-based experiences and for the unit's relationship to the local schools and with its graduates.[52] While much of the Relationship to the World Standard is similar to the Curricula Standard and the Evaluation, Program Review and Planning Standard of the 1982 revised NCATE Standards, it does require the unit "to provide professional development services" to first year practitioners, to involve practitioners in the unit's decision-making process and collaborate with the local schools in conducting research.[53]

The remaining three Redesign standards, which are Faculty, Student, and Governance and Resources, differ from their counterparts in the 1982 revised NCATE Standards in terms of being "more comprehensive and specific." The specificity of these three standards is demonstrated in each standard's inclusion of more quantitative criteria. The quantitative nature of the

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[52] NCATE Redesign, pp. 19-21.

[53] Roth, "A Comparison," pp. 10-11.

standards is illustrated by the inclusion of specific faculty load criterion, student-faculty ratio criterion, and student admission and retention criteria.[54]

While the Redesign Standards retain much of the qualitative criteria utilized in the former NCATE Standards, it is the quantitative nature of the Redesign Standards that receives more questioning. The problem in part is that the Standards do not have any statistical validity. In fact, NCATE Standards have always tended "to reflect the philosophical and professional consensus of the day and not empirical fact."[55]

In response to a statement in the Redesign document which states that the "standards reflect nationally accepted criteria based upon research and recognized profesional best practice",[56] the Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities stated that

> We believe that the phrase ". . . upon research and . . . " should be deleted and replaced by a statement that ". . . reflects professional agreement and judgment . . ." in the first

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Rolf Larson, personal interview held at Fairfax, VA on June 19, 1985.

[56] NCATE Redesign, p. 3.

> paragraph. There is no evidence in the document to suggest that the standards proposed in the redesign document have any greater research basis than any other standards used to date.[57]

The "best practice" approach to developing standards can be perceived as arbitrary, or even, at its worst, as "fadish," the point being that the Standards "tend to reflect the fads" within education and, therefore, "always lag behind" the educational needs of society and the educational technology that could assist in meeting those needs.[58]

An example of the arbitrary nature of some of the quantitative criteria is illustrated in the requirement that students in teacher training programs must achieve a 2.5 grade point average. The GPA criterion has been criticized in that it "is not supported by any research."[59] The proposed GPA criterion has been further criticized in that grade inflation makes the 2.5 requirement almost meaningless,[60] and, therefore, does

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[57] TECSCU Response to Draft Document for NCATE Redesign, February 27, 1985, Denver, CO, p. 7.

[58] Lyn Gubser, interview, June 18, 1985.

[59] Marianne C. Murphy, president of AILACTE in a joint letter to Dr. Richard Kunkel, executive director of NCATE and Dr. J.T. Sandefur, March 5, 1985.

[60] Lyn Gubser, interview, June 18, 1985.

not truly "capture the rigor" of the standard's implication.[61]

In addition to the concern over the quantitative nature of the Standards is the criticism of the Standards in regard to their clarity. While other groups, such as AILACTE and AACTE, and individuals have addressed the issue of the need for clarity and consistency in the development and implementation of the Redesign Standards, a written response by TECSCU summarizes the concern best by stating that

> There are marked inconsistencies in the statements of criteria. Some are stated in an extremely vague manner and others are performance standard specific. On several occasions a single criterion contains multiple criteria. In a redesign effort it would seem to be appropriate to bring uniformity to the statements of criteria so that they are written in a parallel fashion. It would be appropriate if they were written in a manner which would minimize the subjective judgments of team members. If there is no commonality of meaning, criteria can't be applied in an objective manner, and the consequences will be familiar, i.e., accreditation or its denial will be based on the interpretations given by team members to criteria. It would be appropriate to state criteria and follow with evidence questions.[62]

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[61] American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Board Memorandum, XIV.A.1, February 25, 1985.

[62] TECSCU, Response, pp. 2-3.